

2026 Global Conference on Trade, Tariffs, and Development in Africa
African Studies Centre Leiden
18 to 19 June 2026

Draft Conference Programme

Day 1: 18 June 2026

Conference Organisers:

Dr. Ayokunu Adedokun (LUC, Leiden University), Professor Dr. Mayke Kaag (ASC, Leiden University), and Professor Dr. Chibuike Uche (ASC, Leiden University).

08:00 – 09:00 | Arrival and Registration

Participants arrive and register. Tea, coffee, and light refreshments will be served.

09:00 – 09:05 | Opening Remarks

Professor Dr. Mayke Kaag

African Studies Centre Leiden

Welcome remarks and introduction of the keynote speaker.

09:05 – 09:15 | Participant Introductions and Conference Connections

Facilitated by Dr. Ayokunu Adedokun

Assistant Professor of Public Policy and International Development, Leiden University

Keynote Address

09:15 – 09:55 | Keynote Address and Moderated Discussion

Dr. Bright Okogu

Chief of Staff, World Trade Organization (WTO)

Representing WTO Director General Dr. Ngozi Okonjo Iweala

Topic: To Be Announced (TBA)

Moderated Discussion and Audience Q&A: 09:40 – 09:55

Thematic Panel Session 1

Global Trade Order, Protectionism, and African Economic Sovereignty

Core Theme: This session examines how protectionism, geopolitical fragmentation, and contested multilateralism are reshaping Africa's trade relations and economic sovereignty.

Panel Sessions

Note: Each speaker will deliver a 20-minute presentation, followed by a 15-minute moderated discussion and audience Q&A led by Professor Dr. Mayke Kaag and Dr. Ayokunu Adedokun.

09:55 – 10:30 | Paper 1, Dr. Martin C. Steinwand

Department of Government, University of Essex

Topic: Protectionism or Free Trade in Africa? Constituent Preferences and Policy

Outcomes in Comparative Perspective

Q&A: 10:15 – 10:30

10:30 – 11:05 | Paper 2, Dr. Solomon George Zori

Department of Accounting and Control, Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, Netherlands

Topic: U.S. Tariff Shocks and African Capital Markets: Financial Transmission and Development Implications

Q&A: 10:50 – 11:05

11:05 – 11:25 | Coffee and Tea Break

11:25 – 12:00 | Paper 3, Professor Echkoundi Mhammed

Mohammed V University, Morocco

Topic: Fragmentation of Globalization and Geopolitical Reconfiguration: AfCFTA as a Strategy of Economic Resilience for African Economies

Q&A: 11:45 – 12:00

12:00 – 12:15 | Director's Address

Professor Dr. Marleen Dekker

Director, African Studies Centre Leiden

Reflections on the role of the African Studies Centre Leiden as a leading global centre for interdisciplinary research, policy engagement, and scholarly collaboration on Africa and global development.

12:15 – 13:00 | Lunch Reception

Sandwiches, tea, coffee, and light refreshments will be served in the main hall.

Thematic Panel Session 2

Trade Policy, Agriculture, and Structural Transformation

Core Theme: This session explores how agricultural policy, trade reform, and gender inclusion influence structural transformation and development outcomes in Africa.

13:00 – 13:35 | Paper 4, Dr. Newman Tekwa

University of South Africa, South Africa

Topic: Gender, AfCFTA, and Structural Transformation in Southern African Economies: The Cases of Zimbabwe, Zambia, and South Africa

Q&A: 13:20 – 13:35

13:35 – 14:10 | Paper 5, Dr. Oluwakemi Adeola Obayelu

Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

Topic: Review of Rice Policies in Nigeria: Implications for Achieving Competitive Advantage in Rice Production

Q&A: 13:55 – 14:10

14:10 – 14:30 | Coffee and Tea Break

Thematic Panel Session 3

Africa in a Changing Geopolitical Trade Order

Core Theme: This session investigates Africa's responses to AGOA, China's growing influence, and the broader geopolitical restructuring of global trade relations.

14:30 – 15:05 | Paper 6, Dr. Uwem Samuel Umoh

University of Hradec Králové, Czech Republic

Topic: African Countries' Responses to the African Growth and Opportunity Act Under President Trump

Q&A: 14:50 – 15:05

15:05 – 15:40 | Paper 7, Eniola Sonuga

Optimal Policy, Lagos, Nigeria

Topic: The New Cold War in Trade Law: Leveraging AGOA and China's Zero Tariff Policy for Africa's Structural Transformation

Q&A: 15:25 – 15:40

15:40 – 16:15 | Paper 8, Dr. Clara Weinhardt

Maastricht University, Netherlands

Topic: Trapped Interdependence: The Limits of Geoeconomic Agency in Kenya's Trade and Investment Relations

Q&A: 16:00 – 16:15

16:15 – 16:45 | Networking Break

16:45 – 17:00 | Day One Reflections

Professor Chibuike Uche

Stephen Ellis Professor of the Governance of Finance and Integrity in Africa
African Studies Centre Leiden

17:00 – 17:30 | Evening Reception

Drinks and light refreshments will be served.

Day 2: 19 June 2026

09:00 – 09:05 | Opening Remarks

Professor Dr. Mayke Kaag

African Studies Centre Leiden

Welcome remarks and introduction of the keynote speaker.

09:05 – 09:15 | Participant Introductions and Conference Connections

Facilitated by Dr. Ayokunu Adedokun

Assistant Professor of Public Policy and International Development, Leiden University

Keynote Address

09:15 – 09:55 | Keynote Address and Moderated Discussion

Tsotetsi Makong

Director, African Continental Free Trade Area, Accra, Ghana

Topic: The AfCFTA and the Reinvention of the Global Economic System

Moderated Discussion and Audience Q&A: 09:40 – 09:55

Thematic Panel Session 4

Taxation, Governance, and Trade Regulation in Africa

Core Theme: This session explores the relationship between tariff governance, taxation, illicit financial flows, and civil society participation in African trade governance.

Panel Sessions

Note: Each speaker will deliver a 20-minute presentation, followed by a 15-minute moderated discussion and audience Q&A led by Professor Dr. Mayke Kaag and Dr. Ayokunu Adedokun.

09:55 – 10:30 | Paper 9, Dr. Gbenga Oyebode Falana

African Centre for Tax and Governance, Nigeria

Topic: Tariff Regimes and Illicit Financial Flows in Africa: Trade Mis-Invoicing, AfCFTA Risks, and Domestic Resource Mobilisation

Q&A: 10:15 – 10:30

10:30 – 11:05 | Paper 10, Professor Dr. Irma Mosquera

Leiden University, Netherlands

Topic: Good Tax Governance and Trade: A Case Study of the Samoa Agreement

Q&A: 10:50 – 11:05

11:05 – 11:25 | Coffee and Tea Break

11:25 – 12:00 | Paper 11, Ocen Walter Onen

University of Pretoria, South Africa

Topic: The Role of African Civil Society Actors in International Trade and Tariff Negotiations

Q&A: 11:45 – 12:00

12:00 – 13:00 | Lunch Reception

Sandwiches, tea, coffee, and light refreshments will be served in the main hall.

Thematic Panel Session 5

Infrastructure, Green Transition, and Sustainable Trade

Core Theme: This session explores the relationship between infrastructure, trade resilience, logistics, environmental governance, and Africa's green industrial transition. Particular attention is given to how infrastructure systems, climate related disruptions, natural resources, and regulatory frameworks influence Africa's integration into regional and global markets.

13:00 – 13:35 | Paper 12, Dr. Clayton Hazvinei Vhumbunu

University of the Free State, South Africa

Topic: Trade Without Friction? Infrastructure, Logistics, and the Reality of AfCFTA Integration

Q&A: 13:20 – 13:35

13:35 – 14:10 | Paper 13, Dr. Marina Dodlova, Dr. Justyna Jantos, Professor Krisztina Kis-Katos, and Dr. Anna Kochanova

University of Münster, Germany; University of Göttingen, Germany; and Cardiff University, United Kingdom

Topic: Disaster Induced Import Dynamics: Evidence from South African Floods

Q&A: 13:55 – 14:10

14:10 – 14:30 | Coffee and Tea Break

14:30 – 15:05 | Paper 14, Dr. Gideon Ndubuisi

Delft University of Technology, Netherlands

Topic: Regionalizing Green Transition Minerals for Structural Transformation in Africa

Q&A: 14:50 – 15:05

15:05 – 15:40 | Paper 15, Dr. Ndubuisi Augustine Nwafor

University of the West of England, Bristol, United Kingdom

Topic: Plastic Pollution Regulation in Africa: Could AfCFTA Be the Silver Bullet?

Q&A: 15:25 – 15:40

15:40 – 16:00 | Coffee and Tea Break

Thematic Panel Session 6

Trade Sovereignty, Protectionism, and Development Futures

Core Theme: This session reflects on the tensions between free trade, protectionism, sovereignty, and external conditionality in determining Africa's development trajectory.

16:00 – 16:35 | Paper 16, Professor Prema Elumalai, Professor P. R. L. Rajavenkatesan, and Mr. Ragul O. V.

VIT School of Law, Vellore Institute of Technology, Chennai, India and High Court of Madras, Chennai Campus, Tamil Nadu, India

Topic: Hegemonic Protectionism and African Sovereignty in an Era of Contested Multilateralism

Q&A: 16:20 – 16:35

16:35 – 17:10 | Paper 17, Seboka Alemu

University of Szeged and Arsi University, Ethiopia

Topic: Agricultural Trade and IMF Tariff Conditionality in Sub-Saharan Africa

Q&A: 16:55 – 17:10

17:10 – 17:45 | Paper 18, Dr. Okey Ndubueze and Professor Dr. Chibuike Uche

University of Applied Sciences Europe, Amsterdam and Leiden University

Topic: From Colonialism to Neocolonialism: African Tariff Architecture and the Question of Trade Sovereignty

Q&A: 17:30 – 17:45

17:45 – 18:15 | Networking Break

18:15 – 18:30 | Closing Reflections

Professor Chibuike Uche

Stephen Ellis Professor of the Governance of Finance and Integrity in Africa

African Studies Centre Leiden

18:30 – 20:00 | Closing Reception and Boat Cruise in Leiden

Drinks and light refreshments will be served.

All inquiries about this conference can be sent to:

Professor Dr. Chibuike Uche (c.u.uche@asc.leidenuniv.nl) and Dr. Ayokunlu

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